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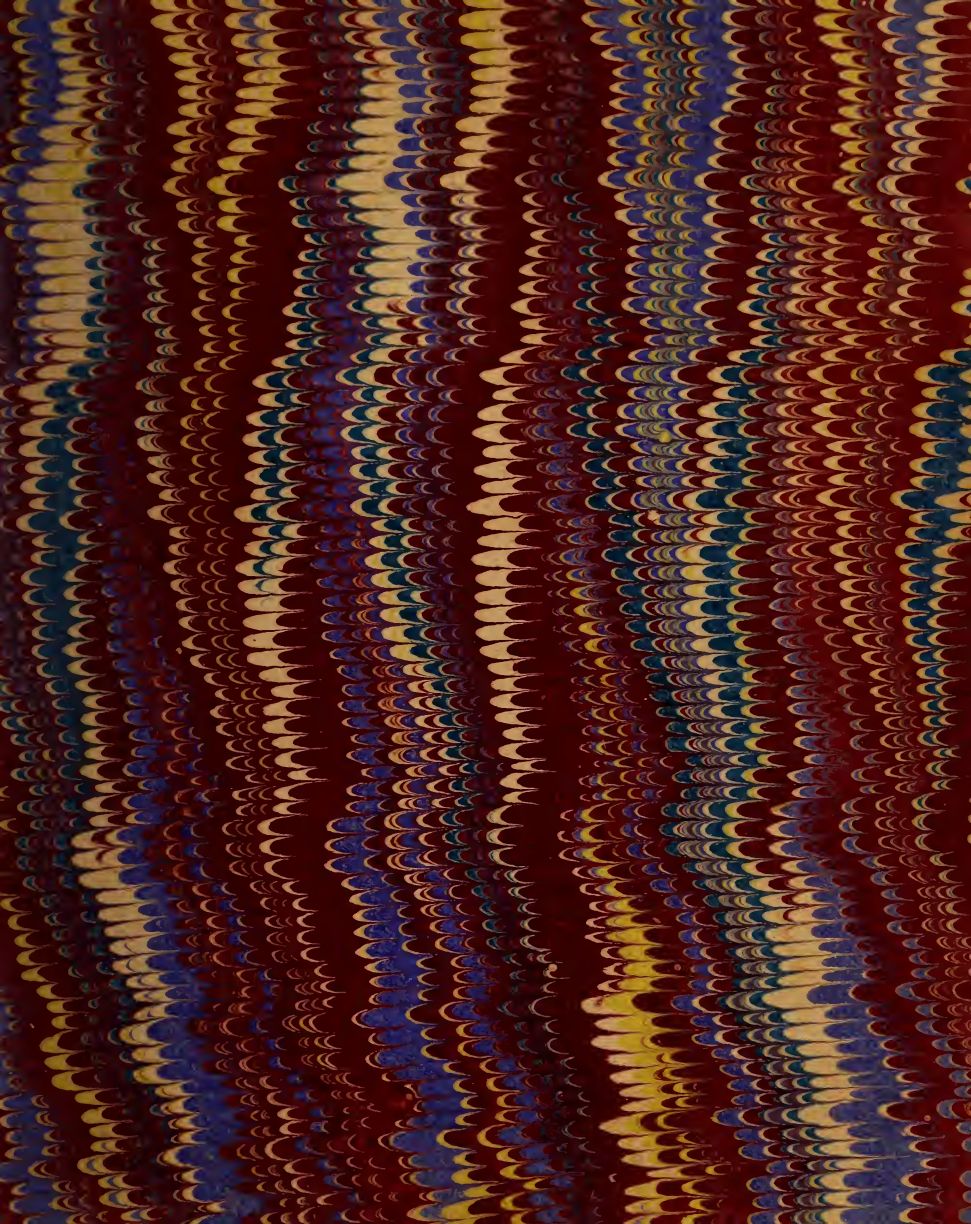
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Letters from  
An Unknown Friend.

12

Elizabeth  
Merriam ?

LETTERS  
FROM AN  
UNKNOWN FRIEND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Trinities and Sanctities."

*Elizabeth M. ...*



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# LETTERS

FROM AN

## UNKNOWN FRIEND.

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*My Friend, the World's, and Truth's,—*

FOR I do not reach out to possess thee in any personal sense, since that would be to crush the Psyche and mar relationship; as clutching at butterflies destroys their glory and reduces the winged creatures to a modicum of dust. Thou canst be truly the possession of my soul only so far as both souls are the world's and God's. We do not possess each other, but both are possessed by Living Principles, and, side by side, aspire.

. . . . .

HUSH! Behold! In silence—in calm—  
Majestically sweet—  
Stepping adown the vista of years  
The soul of a friend to meet,—



Slow pacing — no haste — no storm  
Of hurtling elements attending;  
But stately, the soul cometh — step by step  
With sure purpose tending  
To the long fore-ordained moment of meeting,  
To the sweet glad surprise and the greeting —  
Henceforth to pace the long path together, —  
Shoulder to shoulder, — *more* than comrade or brother !

. . . . .

*My Friend,*—

IT is the Christmas season and I would greet thee. What is most fitting, — that I should bring thee a gift or give thy portion to the needy? Is it thy birthday I would celebrate or the dawn upon the world of that life which is in the Christ? Let us ask ourselves what it is we would commemorate, and what is fitting. Thou art my friend in the inner ways of peace and sacred calm. Our friendship is one of the sacraments. Shall I mingle with the grasping, clutching crowd, and mar the sacred rite of gift-bestowing by barter and vexation of

spirit? Will not a flower tell thee as well the story of my sympathy with thee in the sacred joy of this gift to the world of the Christ-spirit? Will not a flower be a *living* messenger, born out of the heart of nature and teeming with speech of infinite things? Let me send thee an emblem of peace. If I choose thee a gift, let it be symbolic of our relationship on the inner planes of the life and love universal, and let me go forth to the choosing in quietness of spirit. Can any gift be worth so much to thee as this same serenity of soul which I would bring to thee unmarred? Wilt thou not find a blessing in it no material gift can hold? Then should my face shine and my hands be purified by living water when I go forth in calm and without haste, but with sure faith to seek the symbolic gift. I shall be led to it. It waits. For I will not bring thee, embodied in it, hurry and worry and disturbance of spirit. However small the gift, it shall have its word to utter from my soul to thine.

*Friend, —*

WHAT our limited minds deem a great amount of space lies between us, but my thought touches you. We cannot part.

The Ideal is the Real. Thoughts are the great and persistent Realities ever seeking to project themselves on material planes. Behind every visible fact is a thought or a principle. I saw a drunkard reeling along the street to-day and I saw he was the visible sign, in crudest form, of all intemperance, whether in appetites or in mental proclivities.

Intemperance is lack of poise. The only successful weapon against it is breadth of development, symmetry of growth. One may never touch wine or follow the path of vice, and yet be temperately intemperate. It expresses itself in word or look. It may show itself in loud laughter or coquettishness, in unreason and hysteria.

Meeting a grossly obese person in the street, I may congratulate myself on my unlikeness to him ; but am I sure that I am not as much a victim to that bloated egoism of which he is the visible sign ? I shudder at disease and deformity. Am I as greatly moved and pained by those things which disease and deformity symbolize ? The reality of them is on spiritual planes. My darling sin is as great an incubus as a malformed spine, and an influence for evil is worse than infectious disease.

. . . . .

You write that you are impatient for results. Impatience is a matter of our finite perceptions, which overrate time and space.

How many ages, think you, did it take Nature to make an eye ? The light went on shining perhaps millions of years before these projections of the brain were unveiled and rendered responsive to its vibrations. Nature is not miserly of effort.

She does not count the cost. It was the nature and the business of the light to *shine*, to radiate itself. The rest took care of itself. There was *time* enough! A million years more or less to Nature is nothing. She is prodigal of time. So long as the light went on with *its* province the eye could be relied upon to appear upon the scene, in the fulness of times. It was coming; it was nearing; it was at hand long before it was perfected in all its beauty and power, — the jewel set in the forehead!

So it is with Truth. It radiates age after age till the soul of man grows more and more vibrant to it. No haste, no visible result; yet the dull, cloddish veil is gradually becoming thinner. The soul is destined to look forth, resplendent, reflecting the Light of Truth.

“Say not: I never throw to fool or clown

My goodly pearls; for swine I ne’er amassed them.

Say rather: *Are* these pearls which I cast down,

And are those always swine to whom I cast them?”



THE soul flashes across the plane of material life in a brief span, as a mirror held to the sunlight darts a ray. We must hold ourselves sunward and — leave the rest to eternal laws.

. . . . .

OUR dull and seemingly profitless occupations are as a background upon which to paint acts of service.

. . . . .

*My Friend of Many Earthly Years and for the Hereafter,—*

TO-DAY I write from “my little white chamber, whose name is Peace,” a church chime playing outside.

We cannot imagine what a charm and what bright helpfulness we should find in those with whom we are daily associated in the family, if we would withdraw from them at times.

Relationships have their orbital laws and should hold to orderly times and seasons of near approach. Inharmony often comes from too frequent meetings, the leaven grows bitter.

People would return to us renewed, bringing and receiving blessing from the meeting, if we suffered them to withdraw from too intimate association.

When the importance of the psychic forces is recognized it will be enough to say to a friend, "I have need of withdrawal for a time," to have our need respected without complaint, as much as a need for food. Those forces are as easily crushed as the down on a butterfly's wing, and to obtrude presence upon another in the exactingness of affection or of personal need is to act brutally to the delicate unfoldings of the spiritual nature.

So much of the inharmony of daily life would become adjusted if people would practice this withdrawal.

We need to be alone at times for the soul to find itself amid the roar of the tempests of life.

Be not too much in each other's presence, and inharmonious vibrations will often sink to rest, and a great calm fall upon the spirit. It will be one of the greatest benefits of greater wealth and higher civilization that each human being will be able to have a chamber into which to withdraw when there is need to regain composure and strength; and such need should come to be respected by those deeming themselves our nearest and dearest.

. . . . .

*Beloved, —*

DARE I touch with the crudities of language thy great and mysterious joy in the little guest newly come to thy fireside? I behold thee look in its eyes, with questioning longing, seeking to know what manner of soul this is which thy nature hath beckoned out of the empyrean and drawn within the portals of material life, assuming the great responsibility of its training. I know thy

thought. Thou hast given the child a form and an exterior life, but its real life as a soul thou hast not given it. That is hid with infinite life-principles. Thou owest to that soul great loyalty.

What patience, what withholding of thine own ideals, waiting the child's slower pace, will be exacted of thee! It must be that thy child will learn sweetness and generosity from thy dear ways. She must learn that thy loyal friendship for her may be trusted, and that mother-love in thee will not be suffered to grow exacting and arbitrary. Thou wilt never act as if she were thy possession. Thou knowest that she belongs to her creator, not to thee. Thou wilt beware of the tyranny of that little word "my" which is at the root of so many errors. The Ego says, "*My* child," "*I* gave it life." Did you? Is life then a thing in your gift? You were its channel, but the life cometh from afar.

As the cares for her helpless years cease, and she becomes a woman, with her own tastes and interests, thou wilt be strong to make the crowning

sacrifice of motherhood, if need be, in seeing her path lead away from thine by the law of her growth. Yet will both of you seek to rejoice in whatsoever pleasures the other, and each will promote the wishes of the other, each preserving her individual freedom as a dower not to be lightly laid down. Thou wilt consecrate thy child to the uses for which she is best adapted, for thou holdest her *in trust*. And thou shalt not greatly lose. The joyous and willing service of a free nature shall be thine from her. Her reverent love will be the greater for thy exacting nothing. Thou shalt not be foolishly indulgent, but shalt teach her to confer with thee as to her best good, and as to the powers which are hers ; yet beware, in middle life, lest thy virtues trip thee and make thee inflexible of judgment.

Bigotry is not alone a matter of religion. It may enter into all our methods in daily life. It is the danger which the crystallized character encounters at the high noon of life — that it becomes difficult



to yield its tried methods or judgments to newer ways. Thou wilt hold thine in readiness to help, and yet with open mind and entire spiritual hospitality spread wide thy doors to the trial of the new ways of a new generation. For no teacher is unanswerable but experience. The young often hear words of advice as if in a dream. Those words have no reality to them until experience drives them in on the consciousness.

I have often felt how insidious is the approach of the selfish exactions of age. So much has to be said of the irreverence of youth, we forget the other side, and that in some homes the children attain middle life without being accorded the respect to their individual tastes which is their just due.

Unless a son or a daughter marries and goes from home, it often happens that in the mind of the parent he or she remains perpetually a child, from whom obedience is exacted, and in whom self-defence is accounted irreverence and undutifulness. A son shakes himself free of much of this and

asserts his manhood. It falls harder on the daughter, who often sacrifices herself in a mistaken sense of duty till health and almost reason give way and the life is a waste place. But that is not a true friendship between mother and child where just proportions are thus lost and either nature encroaches upon the other. I know thy thought and mine are not at variance in this. Thou wilt, in after years, appeal to the womanly strength of thy child to live out truly her own life—not thine. Thou wilt seek to make her self-reliant, and thou wilt be watchful in thyself of the encroaching selfishness of age. So shalt thou never know age, dear heart, but renew and enlarge thy life in her younger life and fresh interests. She will bring thee immortality here on the earth, and in laying down thy life thou shalt find it.

. . . . .

I SAW a child in the street balancing a barrel on her head. Her uplifted arms seemed stretched

on an invisible cross. She is unconscious that her life has any such verisimilitude. She knows not that it has power to dignify by its symbolism her sordid lot. She goes to Sunday School and hears that a Saviour loved her and died for her; but the fact has no reality to her. It has no connection in her mind with the barrel, under whose weight she staggers along. How can I put her in touch with that great divine and eternal fact of a Christ-principle unless I manifest it to her by my helpfulness? Evidently it should reach her in this nineteenth century through its development into the altruistic spirit of humanity. I follow her home. She displays her acquisition of the barrel with as beneficent a spirit as I could put into my share of a Christmas festival for her kind. She is evidently her mother's righthand man. She comforts the children and scrimps her own supper for theirs. With great glee she breaks up the barrel, assuring her mother of more from the same source; she displays hope, courage, faith; she emanates the

very Christ-principle I would have revealed to her. She has it already in fulness. It is she who teaches me to make of every occasion an opportunity for helpfulness and cheer.

There is E—— for twenty years an invalid, debarred from the privilege of helping her parents in their old age. She was wise in season, however, and has bestowed upon them all these years the gifts in her possession for them—patience and courage and a sunny temper. Ah, if we might all realize that these are more valuable gifts to our dear ones than all earthly goods! If we might always sound a sweet note! Then, at least, there would be *so* much gained; *so* much that is really ours to give and theirs to receive.

. . . . .

You cannot hit upon any truth that the “wise of eld” did not know it and reveal it. It is the ears that are deaf. The truth was always sound-

ing loud enough. "In the *beginning* was the Word." There has been perpetual witnessing to the truth in all nations and all times. Strange — strange we do not hear and know. I must believe that the inmost soul does know what the mind does not record nor the consciousness note. How it would dignify life if we did know all that is hidden in the struggle and the endurance; and, on the other hand, how shocked we should be to behold all the lack behind the hasty word and careless act. So many things would be impossible to us were we more aware of God; that is, more conscious of our being co-workers with Infinite Law and Infinite Love.

. . . . .

WHEN I hear people questioning if the miracles were actually performed, I feel that they stand on the plane of the sense-life, and are enslaved by mere phenomena, — by those external things which



have no reality in themselves, and are only effects produced within ourselves. I feel that they are down in dim cellars under the House of Life, groping vainly amid cobwebs and rubbish. The Earth-smell is in their nostrils. The Earth-damps threaten them. In dark corners hideous but unreal forms seem to menace them. They are full of fears. Come up higher, friends, to the plane of spiritual perceptions. Listen to the speech of symbols old as time and unchanging through eternities!

The vital question is, what miracles are performing *here* and *now* in thy spiritual kingdom. Is the Christ-Principle within thee even *now* performing miracles? Does it turn life's water into wine, — symbol of strength and courage and of joy? Through its power do you walk upon the waves of discord and turbulence born of the sense-life, and of the grasping greed of the Ego? Is the multitude nourished to-day, as then, by an apparent modicum of truth, — a paltry five loaves and five fishes? Can you offer the world your single word in humble

faith that it will be multiplied, and that its power to nourish is inestimable? Then have you believed in and lived out the miracle of the loaves and fishes; for you have gone back of the symbol to the great reality embodied in it, which is a million-fold more in its world-wide and age-long applications than the material and visible fact could be, and which reveals a great spiritual Law in which and by which universes may abide throughout eternities. For to such Law there is no shadow of turning. Stand here in the light of the Christ-Principle and thy blindness will receive sight, and thy halting feet walk forward. Resurrection from the grave of Self and of the sense-life; renewal from the inharmonies that produce disease; emergence from the tomb into the garden of God, the realm of divine laws, — these will be no far-away miracles of a past age, dim in the mists of history, but a matter of vital helpfulness to-day, in all that we do — an Emmanuel, — God with us — that our joy may be full.

Behind every act, and every event is that

which it symbolizes, — some universal and eternal principle.

. . . . .

“KNOW of a truth that only the Time-Shadows perish or are perishable.” Time and space, both a matter of our limitations in material life, blind us as to realities. Yesterday, perhaps, I held the child in my arms; to-day he has vanished. Am I therefore childless? What has in reality happened? A soul was drawn by mine to expression on the material plane. He came over my threshold and stood in my presence as if to make known to me that he existed and that his destiny was linked with mine. A mysterious tie has been consummated for future incarnations, or has been repeated or emphasized out of the past. Who can say? How intimately has this soul approached the mother of its outward form! How it has throbbed with her heart-beats and responded to all her life-currents and been permeated with her spiritual conditions!

How close the bond! Surely it cannot, in the economy of nature, have been for nothing. Surely law shall not govern the emergence of the butterfly and leave the emergence of a soul to chance! The reason for his withdrawal we may not know, but the fact remains that this Soul approached and became visible, thereby making known to the mother the fact of his existence. She may always *know* now — for has she not seen him? Did he not come within the veil wherein she is shrouded; and when its folds drop away from her, shall she not behold the being who for a brief space assumed sonship toward her, that she through him should know the bliss and the sacred sorrow of motherhood, and that he through her should attain to holy knowledge of womanhood and of the mystery of birth? Divine mystery of the Church of old, forever new, forever re-enacted wherever there is spiritual motherhood and spiritual sonship!

What impress does this Soul take hence with him concerning womanhood and birth? What ten-

derness may grow in him from this brief sojourn close to the heart of woman, the heart of joyful sacrifice ! Unmarred by earth-life and its misunderstandings, the mother-soul calls to him, naming him, " Son of my Soul ! "

. . . . .

REMEMBER St. Theresa's saying, when reduced to two pence, " Theresa is nothing and two pence not much ; but Theresa, two pence and God are all things ! "

. . . . .

I FEEL that I need to keep in mind the true value of things. What is worth so much to me as serenity of spirit ? How many things about which I grow disquieted will seem of little value by to-morrow even, and surely I would not lay my tranquillity on the altar of false gods, — mere dolls — trifles of the fancy or of the selfwill !

TO-DAY I suffer pain. Do I not know of aught that can help? Need I suffer? I have heard of the wounded dog lying down in the stream till all fever left his wounds and healing began. Is it not given to me to know of the streams of renewal ever waiting, ever flowing through all natures? Let me become conscious only of these rivers of peace. Rivers and rivers with bounding tides, — flowing — flowing! Let me lie down in their channels and surrender my wounds in faith, and let the waters of healing bear away my pain, — far away where the strong tide of infinity shall engulf them and sweep them out of existence.

Let me believe in the streams of renewal! Let me invite the rivers of peace!

. . . . .

It is much to be regretted that we so often light our lamp and then fail to carry it into the dark



corners of our life, and so miss of its needed illumination upon thought and act.

This is as truly hiding the light under a bushel as in the usual interpretation of it. To-day I perceive a truth, label it, pigeon-hole it, and, alas! go away and leave it, when I should take it with me into the very next strain and stress at the burden of life. The very next perplexity or fret calls for it, and I have left it set away in some corner and gone forth without it into the dark places and paths full of stumbling blocks.

Theoretically we accept much which we forget to apply to the moment's need. We defraud ourselves thus of our birthright in truths which we are able to perceive in high moments, and which are meant for the low moments as well. Where should we take our lamp if not into the cellars?

. . . . .

ARE the pomps and vanities vexing thee? Hast thou ungratified desires? Ask thyself in what part

of thee these desires are, if thou wouldst know if they are vital to thee. Are they of thy soul? Would these things feed it?

Mistake not a cultivated artistic sense for the soul of thee! Like a bright intelligence, it may be the tool or servant of the soul, but it is quite another thing in itself. The *soul* has quite other concerns. The sign of the soul is most of all a consecrated will.

And what is the test of character? Most of all—*self-control*; but fundamentally, hope, faith, courage, humility, patience. A glitter of intellectual fireworks is not the sun of righteousness (right living).

The test of the intelligence is good judgment broadly applied.

The test of goodness is the power of self-sacrifice.

. . . . .

1894 — *The year of our Lord* 1894! How heedlessly we write it! The eighteen hundred and

ninety-fourth year of the slow growth of the spirit of love and service. Far more than that. For thousands of years the race has been creeping forward towards its lost Eden of purity and peace.

One wonders what future event, or event now present with us, will seem important enough to future generations to change our present reckoning and to date time from it. It would seem that as time goes on and new meaning is seen in the words, we should write "in the year of our Lord" with ever-increasing tenderness.

. . . . .

WHEN the prodigal returned, he said, "Father, I have sinned *against heaven* and in thy sight." Was it that the chief of his sinning, to his repentant vision, was against heaven, against the moral law, against the filial principle? Was it outraged sonship and fatherhood which cried aloud on some interior plane for rehabilitation? Was this far more

than the personal wrong? When we wander afar and feed on husks, do we, perhaps, argue that the husks are green and life-sustaining? Do we need to "receive our sight" before we know them to be only husks, and not the principle from which cometh the bread of life?

. . . . .

THE Beast in human nature is tamed in those parts of the world called civilized, inasmuch as we are no longer cannibals; but he is not eliminated. Wherever there is the desire to get something for nothing,—wherever the weak is pushed to the wall by the unscrupulous in the scramble for possession, there is the reign, not of the Angel, nor even of the Human, but of the Beast of Prey in its rapaciousness; nevertheless, as, ages and dynasties, civilizations and countless human histories agone, the singer of old lifted up his face to the heavens and cried, "Though I make my bed in hell, behold,

THOU art *there!*" so to-day we may lie down in selfishness and wrong, but behold, the All-Divine is in the midst of us! Appeal to it in the waste places, in the centres of fraud and greed, and behold, it is there! It awakens — responds! Believe in it! Appeal to it!

. . . . .

TO-DAY thou shalt discover lack in thy brother of integrity or of high moral standards; but beware of self-righteousness. To-morrow thou shalt thyself disappoint a friend, or fail in helpfulness or in deep spiritual insight.

Thou shalt fail even as thy brother failed unless thou hast beheld his fault only with love and sorrow at his short-coming.

The Master's rebuke is symbolic — "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Swift is the coming of this moral Nemesis.

BE as little children holding up their cups to the fountains. Wait not for a vase or chalice of silver. Take thy common, every-day cup of coarse ware and hasten. Hasten, O children! lest ye miss of something precious. I tell you this is no poetic fancy. It is a living reality.

Where, where are those fountains, do you ask, and what is my cup?

The road lies through some act of service; the fountains stream on every side; thy cup is thine open soul just as it is to-day, obscured by perplexities and vexed by trivialities. Drink, and see life with new eyes. Drink, and the trivial things will fall away from thee. The great realities of love, faith, hope, courage, humility, and patient service will obliterate the petty grievances of life.

Your thirst amid the desert, O little children of the Father! is greater than ye know. Lift up your hearts as chalices to the descending ray.



IT is precisely when you feel done with the world, and something within turns with homesick longing towards a more perfect state, that it is required of you to remain in the world, and that you are making ready to best serve it in singleness of purpose. Then is the eye single and the whole body full of light.

Say not before thy last hour, "I have done with earth." It must come to thee sometime to be a co-worker with the Almighty, and it might as well be on this needy planet as in any of His worlds.

Thou art ordered to thy post *here*. Fail not, then, in obedience, though the required service be but patient waiting, gaining "sweetness and light."

. . . . .

TO-DAY I think of a broad, sunlit river, reflecting the heavens in its bosom, and the beauty of the earth along its borders where the foliage stoops to

behold its own loveliness. This river has depths and it has gloomy pools too deep for the sunshine to irradiate or warm. But in the main it is broad and sunny, and in places the sedges come to the surface and are gay with color. It seems to me like a healthy human life, — never stagnant, always pressing onward, always reflecting the light, purifying itself through its activity, its dark and stagnant pools as few as may be. It is an emblem of buoyant courage and of serene purpose. It bears its way onward to the great sea. It is fed from above and from the hidden springs and from all sides, and it carries blessing and refreshing.

Think, my friend, as you approach old age, that the serene courage of age is needed by the younger lives in their perplexities. The time need never come when you cannot speak the word of cheer, and the word of the old, backed by experience, carries weight. It is when endeavor for personal ends is over that we have time and thought and vitality for those still in the struggle.

THE critical sense, with those who possess it in any marked degree, is apt to be overdone, especially in young people. A hypercritical, cynical young person is a monstrosity. The aptness for detail in woman makes her prone to this fault. Few people have attained the grace to feel sorrow at the faults of others as at blemishes on fairest statuary. We do not keep in mind a fair ideal of what each might be. If we did so, shortcomings would affect us more deeply, and our speech would be less superficial and we less glib in criticizing.

. . . . .

AH! how greatly do we need that constant sense of being children of the Almighty,—of being allied to the Over-Soul,—which can make us go singing in the desert of life like the Israelites of old!

Do not, from the fear of being accused of inconsistency, suppress the expression of the heavenly part of yourself. No one can live their utmost ideal, but the truth is no less truth for our unfaithfulness to it.

. . . . .

IMAGINE a spiritual existence in higher spheres where there is never any occasion for speaking about the weather, the health, dress, trade, or domestic problems; where the communication is eye to eye of love, helpfulness, and high purpose. Does it not make our human speech seem a mere babblement, the chattering of monkeys? Has not the noble power been terribly prostituted to low ends? In higher spheres we may not speak until we have somewhat vital to communicate.

. . . . .

How is it with thee, dear "spirit-in-prison?" For thou hast looked out of window at me and I have

beheld thine inner being. Thou art as the spirit of a child, although thy earthly years are many and thy wisdom great. As a child's were thine eyes in their trustful appeal, and like a child thou knowest naught of the mysteries, save in some dim unconscious way, as by almost forgotten memories of some pre-existent state. Often, in thy presence, has thine angel, who beholdest the face of the Father, seemed near, yearning to shield thee from pain and trouble yet impotent to do so. Often hath he seemed to fold wings of peace and blessing about thy head. Often have I felt the exquisite tenderness of his longing as I left thee for the night. I seemed to leave thee in good keeping. May wings of peace and comfort upbear thee through whatsoever ordeal thou mayst have to endure. Come up, dear spirit, and know all the sorrows of earth for what they are, and triumph over pain as it is thy birthright to do.

*My friend, —*

I REJOICE in thee in all ways, but most of all does that which thou art comfort the soul of me for this sojourn on earth, among the shadows and half lights. Yet should I not need such comforting did I sufficiently regard this earth as a "field white unto the harvest" wherein should be gathered fruits unto the Master by willing and eager servants.

. . . . .

THE dignity of decay and death is in our willingness to lay down the body as a worn-out tool, or a tool no longer serving the soul's purpose where it goeth.

. . . . .

WE read, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," yet I think we fail to see the many ways in which we allow evil to overcome



us. You tell me that C—— antagonizes you by her narrowness and cant, while another who was no sectarian has given you fairer ideals and often compelled you to fairer living. But if you allow C—— to arouse a mischievous spirit in you, does not the evil of her ignorant egotism overcome the “sweetness and light” in you? Surely you hold your ideals too dear to let them suffer eclipse from so paltry a cause. Surely any petty antagonism must vanish in your pity that she is unable to make the path she loves attractive to you, and that ignorance compels her to make the lovely unlovely, like the princess in the story from whose lips dropt a toad when she would fain have dropt a pearl.

How can you render fair to her the more liberal way? Can you not let her see that the “sweetness and light” of the Christ-spirit may not need the check-rein of outward observances which we impose on the lawless and turbulent? We cannot afford to do without the rigid letter of the commandments till we are filled with their spirit of just dealing

and a love for orderly conduct. Then it is that the *mere* letter killeth. Then alone is "the Sabbath made for us" since all our days are Lord's days, — holy days, — and all our living stately as a psalm, and all the commandments understood and kept in a broader and deeper and by no means more lax way than the letter of the law can enjoin. We demand of ourselves not less, but other and more and better. Love goes further than obedience.

I suppose in an advanced state of altruism the eighth commandment would be done away with, and where there was no mine and thine each would take freely from all for the good of any one. There may be an exact honesty which is close upon niggardliness, though it be a phase on the upward road many have not yet reached. He who is comfortable in the belief that he breaks no commandment may break all in his incapacity to apprehend the spirit of any; may break the "new commandment" "that ye love one another" most of all; may be incapable of living any one day in

a way worthy of being the Lord's day, a Sabbath of peace and love; may overreach and defraud in all business relations; may be no honor to his parents; may not know the first letter of the alphabet of that spiritual union for high purpose which alone is not adultery.

It is written, "I come not to destroy the law, but to fulfil," and "not one jot or tittle shall pass away *until all be fulfilled.*" That is, *filled full* with that spirit which underlies all its commands,—the spirit of justice and of loving service and of lofty dedication, which alone makes for spiritual at-one-ment with Most High Truth, and which writes the *law* in our *hearts*, making us to live it with far-reaching application.

. . . . .

WE often say in excuse for ourselves, "It is my temperament," as if that settled it beyond cavil. Have we, then, surrendered unconditionally to temperament? Do we own the temperament or does

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the temperament own us? Who *are* we? What is it that sits on a throne within and views the character and temperament and inheritance, and lets the sceptre fall from the nerveless hand and droops and drivels and whines?

“It is my nature” I say, and forget my nature is twofold, — human and divine. Have I inherited only on the animal side? Then ’t is time I cried aloud unto the heavens for the rest of my heritage! Or have I perhaps sold it for a mess of pottage?

. . . . .

You say that you like not so much theorizing about another life, since this one chiefly concerns us, and you doubt if we ever have anything more than there is here.

This is, in truth, a wonderful life and world, — perhaps the epitome of infinite lives and worlds, — but are you quite sure your eyes are open to behold, and your heart open to live all there is in

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and behind this? Know you all its deep significance? Is there naught in it but that which is perishable? What means this age-long struggle of somewhat to utter itself on the planes of matter and of thought? Truly there is more in *this* life than we can compass.

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WHEN will the churches become teachers of applied ethics? It is the greatest need of society. All of us may intellectually perceive what is just and true, but it is another step to feel and love moral beauty, and still another to apply the highest moral law to all our acts. We do not do the best we know. We take our ease in the second best as good enough and more comfortable. It would not be so comfortable did we truly love the best.

. . . . .

WE sit in sorrow because ignorant of the light. In sorrow we reap the harvest of narrow, self-centred lives.


THOU who layest flowers on graves, lay rather the bloom and sweetness of noble acts and large generousities on the altar of thy love for the invisible ones. Thou who mournest in thy love for the lost, know that they are not lost, but one with thee if thou lovest their best good and their swift growth in new worlds, and thou passest on with them and one with them from glory to glory in the character growth which may now be theirs.

Ah! it is so strange and so pitiful how little we make these things the realities of daily life! A parent is gone,—if a nature of large purposes, eager to light up this dark world with the rays of truth and helpfulness, do the children seek to apprehend his present state and purposes, and walk hand in hand with him still, the instruments of the good which his heart and soul were eager to do? Glorious legacy from parent to child, over which the grave can have no victory! Or, if the purposes were less world-wide, at least thou canst be daugh-



terly to some heart for thy mother's sake, perchance because thou wert wont to fail in the old time, and her motherhood shall still be comforted by thine act.

And if thy heritage were not of this exceptionally high sort, but the common one of a parent's faithful care, or even less than that, — even a heritage of weakness and vice, — if thou hast any sorrow and love and forgiveness in thy heart, help the now repentant and remorseful spirit to higher ground, and make the results of his short-comings, which he must now contemplate with such sorrow, as little as may be by consecrating thine own life to highest uses. This would be a true vicarious atonement. Not only what the dear Invisible One would have done, but what his glorified and perfected self would do, — that seek ye to apprehend and fulfil, and so become joined to him eternally in highest and most enduring purposes. So shall time and space be outdone and one world hold you both, and each shall be angel and messenger of light to the other.



ETERNAL Principles cannot desert us. We exist in and by them. If I become unable to grasp the idea of them, if they seem too universal and infinite for my little intelligence to mirror, still do *they* grasp *me* and enfold me, and the revelation of them to me will be in some human and simple guise.

Never can we actually be "without God in the world," though we seem so, and go groping for anchorage. A plummet line "stronger than iron cables are" goes down into the depths of unconscious life and feeling and finds the Infinite Anchorage; and when we stretch away from it and the line grows taut almost to breaking, our inmost nature may thrill in some unexpected moment in answer to it.

. . . . .

WE take our feeble lanterns and go forth in the darkness into the harvest fields. The chill winds from the night of the far past blow mournfully

about us, and great is our travail of spirit that the darkness only grows more visible and our light can penetrate so little way and so few have eyes to behold it. And just as we most despair, and grope painfully with eyes turned earthward, thinking we have all the Master's work to do, lo! behind us, in the east, the Dawn is striding up the sky! Not one ray alone, but a universe full. Thus cometh the Light in the fulness of times. And such times are these, and the Dawn is breaking on many a harvest field, and eyes behold, which, until now, have been holden.

. . . . .

HALF the battle is won when one acquiesces in that which is required of him. He lifts then with the powers that be, and has mighty helpers. Recognize thy task as the next thing for thee and as that which is given thee to do here and now.

Yesterday I wrote you, "So I plod on." What has a creature to do with "plodding" that can

spread its wings, even though they do not bear him far above the earth? I wrote it, however, out of my patience, and there are times when we fall back on patience and endurance. Yet if we saw as we should see, perhaps there would be no call for patience, but only for exaltation.

. . . . .

FIRST we come to be done with accumulating things, and afterwards done with the effort to accumulate facts. In the natural evolution of man, *after* he has striven and won and *made use* of wealth, absorbing its resulting civilization, the chastened and blossoming spiritual nature prompts him to return to simplicity of outer life, while the attained complexity of living is shifted to the inner processes. He wearies of endeavor after those things which no longer stimulate or delight eye and ear, and the spirit retires to digest and to form those conclusions

which constitute wisdom. Then comes another order of things.

. . . . .

How beautiful to find a spot away from the flurry of life, but what a mistake to carry flurry into such holy places. Be silent and grow calm. "Why so hot, little man?"

I am convinced we focus evil and attract it to us, and assist it to spread by mental emanations by thinking much of it even in condemnation. "He *remembers* our sins no more." A perfect being sees not sin. He is beyond receiving mental contagion from it. His pure and holy emanations drive it afar before them and finally permeate the evil with good. Too much study of evil, too frequent dwelling on its details, must blur our angelhood.

"Verily thou art an angel of Heaven fallen in the mire of matter, although thou dost not recognize thyself."

WHAT wise and shining ones we may have to walk with us daily in all earth's dreary furrows, in all its lanes and by-ways of limitation, if we will only look up and invite them. Their power to approach has its law, and our invitation may be necessary. Surely we can make of ourselves magnets to draw such. We may address them and stand receptive to them "without ceasing," and so be helped.

Once in my youth my religious experience received a shock from the remark made to me that prayer was self-magnetism. For years the partial truth of this rose up before me when I would have prayed. Only lately can I answer serenely, "What then? Be it so. What is self-magnetism but the placing one's self within the pale of a great, divine law, and letting it play freely through the spiritual nature?" To magnetize is to polarize, to become negative and receptive to the great currents of Deity that electrify, revivify, and permeate the soul with

new potencies. The negative pole of our being should be Godward to receive all; the positive pole manward and earthward to overcome evil with good.

Evil is as a cloud that wreathes a man about. He — the Soul — is within it. Summon him forth! Call to the Soul, to the divine ideal of him which is in the process of proclaiming itself in his mortal life. Cease to dwell on his sins; for thoughts are entities and constitute the permanent element of things, and you wish to make the angel in him permanent, and not the demon which denies the good in him.

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THE poet saith: —

“Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,  
We Sinais climb, and know it not.”

and the artist paints “The Golden Stair,” with angels ascending and descending. But the real “golden stair” is some dingy, dark, and dirty staircase, where the careworn work-girl toileth upward,



all unwitting if angel helpers walk beside, and knowing not the way lies from glory to glory. The Mount of our Transfiguration is set about by clouds. Broken spirited we walk in the mists and deem it the Valley of Humiliation, while the Soul within us mounts.

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ONE of the most hopeful signs for the future lies in the fact, that we have a religion among us which, with all its faults, yet takes account of the Woman in Deity, and "thanks God and Mother Mary" for its blessings; thus perpetually holding up the divinity of womanhood and motherhood, and their potency to save and uplift.

. . . . .

HE who has many treasures has many duties, and he who has many duties has many treasures; and if our duties drive us and are more than we can

do, it is that our hands are overfull of treasures, and we must let some slip. So we are blessed even in the work exacted of us.

. . . . .

TAKE heed, little children of the Light, to live each day as if it were your last day, and speak or write no word you would long to recall were the power to recall it gone forever. And whatsoever task is set you to do, do it cheerfully, that your memory of it may be sweet. For if a thing must be done, we shall like to remember that we did it with a whole heart and ungrudgingly. Since that which is done grudgingly availeth little and is not the deed of the inner man at all; and that which is done heartily groweth light in the doing.

. . . . .

MOST of us feel, the higher we really climb, that the results are as nothing. We weary of the strenu-

ous effort towards the heights. But any descent is quickly seen. Any backward turn of the wheels brings wreck. What we are really doing on the steep slopes of life is to prop the wheels of the spiritual chariots of victory so that, if they do not ascend higher just yet, they shall not, at least, fall back and begin any swift descent. So stand fast in all faithfulness and oppose yourself to the all too strong downward tendencies.

Instead of shrinking back from life's ordeals we should welcome them as opportunities long-desired, to prove our faithfulness, to recite our lesson once again, this time more perfectly, to expiate, perhaps, some long past faithlessness. How eagerly we should then go about our tasks ; how purposeful would life become.

*My Little Soldier,—*

STAUNCH and faithful, ever with face to the foe! Think not when heavy tasks are laid on you that it is a misfortune, but rather high honor that you are thus singled out to lead or teach. Be not discouraged though you see no results. Waive the flashing sword of Truth. The trend of the ages is behind you, and time but an illusion of human consciousness.







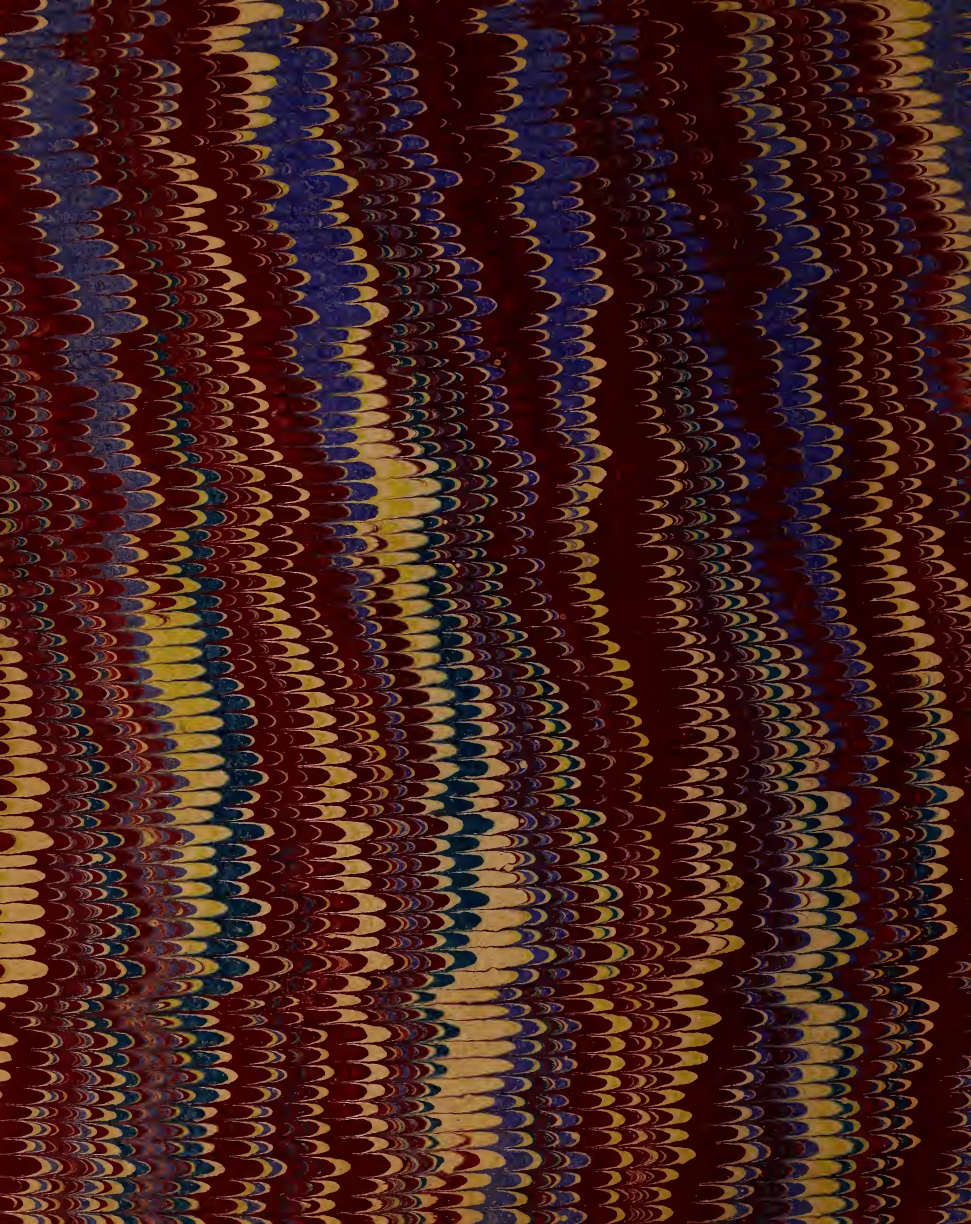




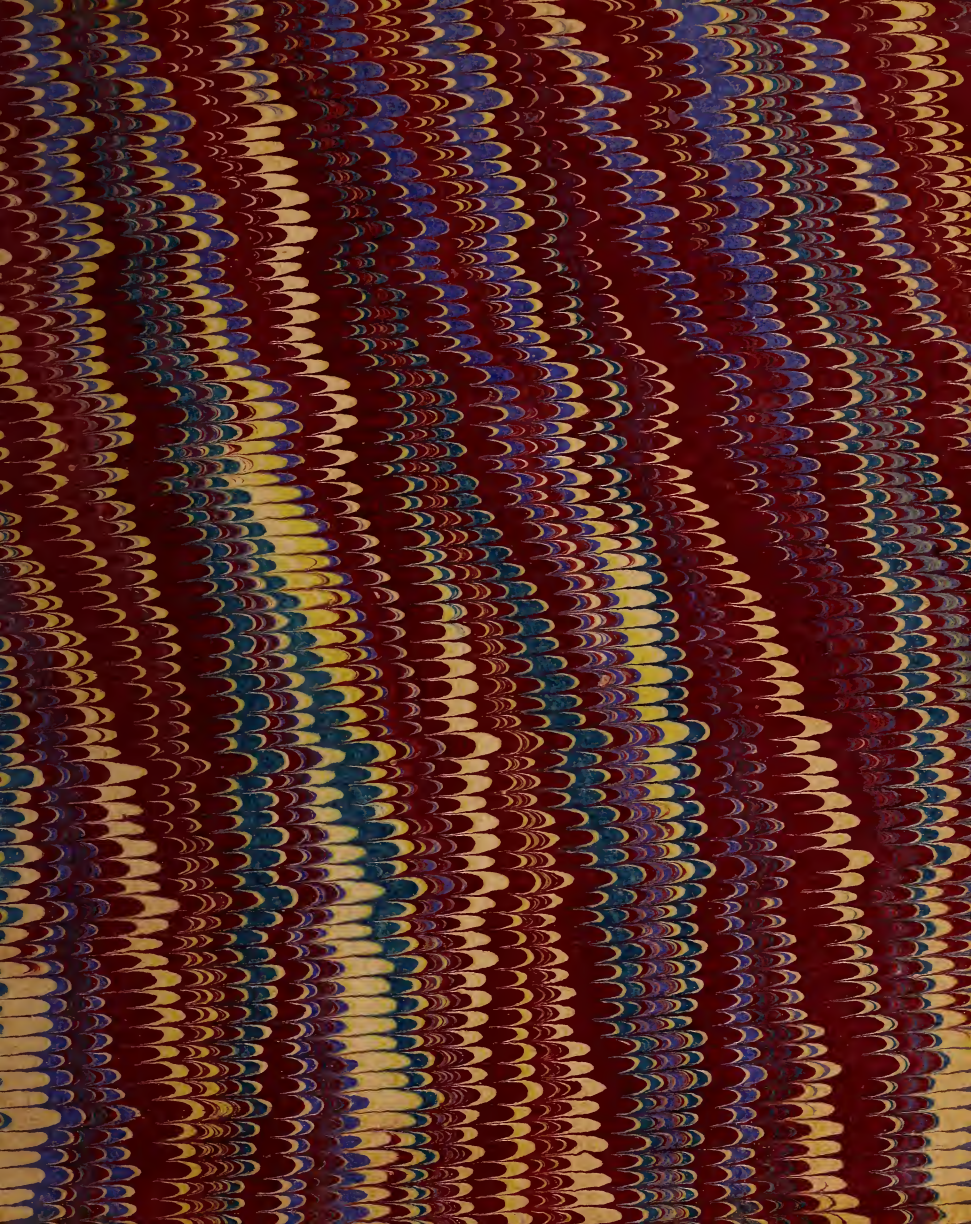




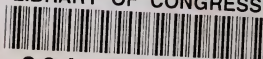








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